DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 444 217 EA 030 503

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TITLE The Role of the Principal and Responsibility for Improving the Quality of Teaching in Japanese Schools.
PUB DATE 2000-04-00
NOTE 24p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (New Orleans, Louisiana, April 24-28, 2000).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research (143) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Administrator Attitudes; Administrator Effectiveness; *Administrator Role; Educational Quality; Elementary Secondary Education; Foreign Countries; *Principals; *Role Perception; School Administration; *Teacher Administrator Relationship
IDENTIFIERS *Japan

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the structure of administrative authority in Japan and America and explores how differing conceptions of the principal's role influence instructional guidance provided to teachers. In the United States, administrators are viewed as facilitators of a school's educational program and are expected to take an active part in professional growth. In Japan, however, principals are seen as managers rather than as directors of an instructional program. To understand these differences, 25 Japanese principals were interviewed. All of them emphasized the organizational facets of their positions over the educational responsibilities. The Japanese principal is more of a coordinator than a leader, whose primary responsibility is to maintain school harmony and ensure that the institution runs smoothly. Therefore, conflict avoidance ranks high on the principal's agenda so they do not press people to improve their performance or to reach specific professional goals. It is believed that if the principal creates a harmonious environment for teaching and learning, members of the community will naturally achieve excellence. Furthermore, the principal's location at the sideline creates a space for teachers to develop and publicly demonstrate their professional expertise, while encouraging faculty members to develop strong bonds with their teaching colleagues. (Contains 37 references.) (RJM)

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ED 444 217

THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL AND RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF TEACHING IN JAPANESE SCHOOLS

Paper Presented at the
AERA Annual Meeting 2000
New Orleans, Louisiana

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Recent cross-national studies point to similarities in the goals of professional development for teachers in Japan and the United States. Both systems encourage teachers to shift from lecture format to more student-centered activities, focus on higher-level thinking skills, use class time more effectively, and increase student initiative (Lewis & Tsuchida, 1997; Stigler & Hiebert, 1997; Tsuchida & Lewis, 1996; Shimahara & Sakai, 1992). However, when one looks beyond this list of general goals, similarities between the two approaches to professional development become more difficult to identify. The structure, form and impetus behind professional development in Japan and America contrast sharply in several areas (Yoshida, 1999; Lewis & Tsuchida, 1997; Tsuchida & Lewis, 1996; Stigler & Hiebert, 1997; Stigler & Stevenson, 1991). One key difference is the role played by administrators. This study examines the structure of administrative authority in each system and explores how differing conceptions of the role of the principal have an impact on the instructional guidance provided to teachers.

Japanese and American education cultures attach unique meanings to the term "leadership" when applied to a school principal. In the United States, administrators are perceived of as facilitators of a school's educational program (Kimbrough & Burkett, 1990; Drake & Roe, 1986; Adler, 1983). As seasoned veterans in the teaching and learning process, American principals are expected to take an active part in professional growth efforts, directing and monitoring these activities in their schools. The model for administrative responsibility in Japanese schools is notably different. Principals are viewed as managers of institutions rather than directors of an instructional program. Japanese principals tend to delegate responsibility over such matters to other members of the school community and remain at the periphery of professional development efforts.

These contrasts between the two systems are likely to generate some important questions in the minds of outside observers: Why is it that principals in Japan tend not to

become involved in the professional development efforts at their schools? How does the administrative focus on non-educational matters affect other members of the school community? If the principal is not a central figure, then who monitors Japanese teachers' performance? Do instructors receive the feedback and support necessary to improve their skills in the classroom?

Over a four month period in 1997 I conducted interviews with twenty-five Japanese educators about these issues. All of the informants were employees of public schools in Chiba, Ibaraki, Niigata and Tokyo Prefectures. Sixty-five percent of the classroom teachers were based at elementary schools and thirty-five percent at junior high schools. Of the total, twenty were classroom teachers (including individuals with special responsibilities, such as "head of student guidance") and five held administrative positions. The interviews were semi-structured, lasting between sixty and ninety minutes each. All questions were open-ended; informants were never asked to choose from a list of prepared answers. I conducted the interviews in a variety of settings (school rooms, coffee shops, and private homes), whatever was most convenient for the interviewee.

The information gleaned from these interviews provides us with a clearer picture of the role that the principal is expected to play and his location within Japanese school culture. In addition, it reveals how patterns of administrative action influence other members of a school staff as they approach professional development. Movement at the top of the authority hierarchy is bound to have a ripple effect throughout the system. As this study shows, teachers' roles are established in response to activity at the top. The responsibilities delegated to Japanese teachers and the resources they employ to improve their professional performance are directly linked to the ways in which principals exercise leadership.

Professional Development in the United States

In American schools, the roles and responsibilities assigned to the principal are multiple and demanding (Kimbrough & Burkett, 1990; Hughes & Ubben, 1989; Drake & Roe, 1986). Administrators are required to wear many different hats, often simultaneously. Drake and Roe (1986) claim that in analyzing the job of the principal, it is helpful to split his duties into two broad categories: tasks with an *administrative-managerial* emphasis, and those connected to the provision of *educational and instructional leadership*. Major duties that fall under the category of administrative-managerial include maintaining school records preparing reports for the central office, preparing and monitoring the budget, and administrating supplies and equipment. Functions or duties related to the educational and instructional leadership category include establishing school-wide goals, instilling a positive climate for learning, stimulating the staff to maintain maximum instructional performance, and developing effective assessment procedures (Drake & Roe, 1986: chapter 2).

Although in the past the managerial facets of the job were emphasized, in recent years principals have been pressed to pay more attention to providing educational and instructional leadership (Kimbrough & Burkett, 190; Drake & Roe, 1986; Lezotte & Bancroft, 1985; Adler, 1983). According to contemporary literature on school administration, effective principals give these facets of their job top priority (Kimbrough & Burkett, 1990; Drake & Roe, 1986; Lezotte & Bancroft, 1985; Sweeney, 1982). Principals are expected to be familiar with current trends and to work in partnership with teachers to improve the quality of instruction provided to students. They are respected by teachers for providing instructional leadership at the classroom as well as the school level. According to Kimbrough & Burkett, "The principal must function as the instructional leader of the school, and in this capacity is intimately involved with the faculty in the instructional process" (Kimbrough & Burkett, 1990: 153).

The evaluation of faculty is considered to be an integral component of this process. In surveys conducted by Sweeney & Vittengl (1987) and by Willis and Bartell (1990), American administrators identified teacher evaluation as the single most important aspect of their job. According to the literature on school administration, the effective principal should, through regular classroom visits, conversations with faculty members, and participation in in-service workshops, keep appraised of how all of the teachers at her site are handling their duties in the classroom (Zepeda & Ponticell, 1995; Kimbrough & Burkett, 1990; Campbell, 1987; Drake & Roe, 1986; Bellon et al., 1976). In addition, she should provide teachers with feedback about their professional performance on a regular basis. By taking an active role in matters of instruction and professional development, "the principal can develop a sense of rapport and trust with the faculty, which sends the message that the development of effective instruction is a mutual task of the staff and faculty" (Kimbrough & Burkett, 1990: 158).

Scholars specializing in this field highlight the potential the evaluation, particularly the observation lesson, supplies for experimenting with new methods and connecting supervision to staff development. (Delandshere, 1996; Zepeda & Ponticell, 1995; Hughes & Ubben, 1989; Drake & Roe, 1986; Hord, Striegelbauer and Hall, 1984; Blumberg & Greenfield, 1980). As Drake and Roe observe, "Evaluation is not the filling out of a sterile checklist, but rather a part of the learning process itself" (Drake & Roe, 1986: 296). The evaluation process is viewed as a vehicle for promoting professional growth and communication between the principal and staff members (Delandshire, 1996; Zepeda & Ponticell, 1995; Drake & Roe, 1986). Although the principal leads the actual evaluation, the process is designed to foster dialogue rather than serve as a one-way flow of information from the evaluator to the evaluatee. Ideally, "there should be a free exchange of ideas between the principal and the teacher" (Campbell, 1987: 5).

Of course, the ideas summarized here represent an ideal model. In reality, there are no doubt teachers would prefer not to be observed by administrators and who do not

find the process rewarding.[1] Nevertheless, the literature on faculty supervision almost unanimously presents the idea that effective administrators regularly spend time in the classrooms and talk frankly with teachers about their professional performance. Teachers and principals are depicted as partners in a quest for professional excellence that will result in improved learning opportunities for students in their classes (Delandshere, 1996; Zepeda & Ponticell, 1995; Campbell, 1987).

The professional development programs provided in American schools tend to be managed by administrators (Kimbrough & Burkett, 1990; Drake & Roe, 1986). The principal may seek the input of faculty members, but she is the individual with ultimate authority over professional development offerings and the person who makes final decisions. This is in part due to the complexity of planning and scheduling workshops, and in part to the expectation that the principal will oversee all instruction-related activity at the school. As Kimbrough & Burkett (1990) advise,

> All effective principals delegate effectively. However, those leadership tasks that are crucial to the realization of educational excellence (such as leadership in curriculum and instruction, community leadership, leadership with the central office) must not be delegated. . . If, for example, the principal delegates responsibility for instructional leadership to an assistant principal for curriculum, the message to the faculty is that the instructional program has low priority.
>
> (Kimbrough & Burkett, 1990: 9)

The Japanese Approach

The role of the principal is conceived of quite differently in Japan. The provision of leadership requires a distinct cache of behaviors and skills. In a questionnaire that Wiilis and Bartell (1990) distributed to administrators in the United States and Japan, American leaders ranked "understanding of the instructional process" as the most

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[1] Drake & Roe (1986), for example, contrast the ideal role of the principal with the duties he actually carries out. They note that principals often aspire to devote most of their time to instructional leadership, but the realities of their job demands require them to spend most of their time completing managerial tasks (Drake & Roe, 1986, chapter 2).

desirable quality of a principal, whereas "moral characters" was given highest priority by Japanese administrators ("understanding of the instructional process" placed fifth out of eight choices). Japanese principals, in contrast to their American counterparts, do not spend a great amount of their time focusing on instructional issues. Instead, administrative detail and the politics of running a school take priority over educational matters. Neither the teachers nor the administrators interviewed for this study expect principals to be actively involved in decisions about curriculum or pedagogy at their schools. Although educators must accumulate years of experience before they are rewarded with principalships, most of that expertise is left behind upon promotion to the administrative ranks. Teachers as well as administrators are comfortable with this arrangement.

In Japan, the promotion to administrator is viewed as a break from the past rather than as an extension of previous work in the classroom. When educators cross the line from classroom teacher to principal, they must reconstruct their professional identities to fit the culture's expectations about what it means to be the leader of an institution. This includes severing the ties that connected them to teachers and reattaching themselves to a different constellation of actors in the school community. None of the principals I interviewed mentioned ever consulting with faculty members about problems they experienced. Instead, they referred to vice-principals, members of the Board of Education, and the president of the PTA (because that person is the "top parent," to quote one informant) as their most trusted confidants. When an individual transports his possessions from the faculty room to the private office that adjoins it, the physical division that separates him from the school's teaching core is often accompanied by a mental distancing from educational activity as well.

All of the principals interviewed for this study emphasized the organizational facets of their positions over the educational responsibilities. The words they chose (*kanri o suru, jinji o suru, shucho o suru*) indicated an emphasis on the managerial

aspects of the job. The principal is charged with the responsibility of ensuring that the various constituencies that make up a school all fulfill their responsibilities and work together smoothly to form one cohesive organization. Building consensus among the various constituencies in the school community takes priority over providing leadership in educational matters (Okano and Tsuchiya, 1998).

The physical organization of the Japanese faculty room is illustrative of the relationship between most principals and the teachers he supervises. The principal's office is the one area physically separated from the common space that houses all staff members' desks. His office is connected to the faculty room, but removed from its core. This mirrors the relationship between the principal and staff at most of the schools I visited: he is available for consultation, but separated from the rest of the faculty and to be approached only after a teacher has made his way through the chain of command or in emergencies.

A carefully constructed hierarchy of authority directs faculty to consult with certain support personnel before they meet with an administrator. Initially, any teacher with a problem or concern is expected to discuss the matter with a co-worker teaching the same grade or subject. If the pair is unable to solve the problem, the next resource is usually the grade-level team leader (*gakunen shunin*). Following this, the advice of the school's head teacher (*kyomu shunin*) is sought. If, at this point, the problem still needs attention, the teachers speak with the vice-principal. Only after all of these channels have been exhausted is the principal approached.

Clearly, expectations regarding the display of leadership in a Japanese learning community are very different than those in an American school. The Japanese principal might be described as a coordinator more than a leader. All of the individuals interviewed for this study stressed the importance of maintaining school harmony, and this is the principal's main responsibility. His primary obligation is to balance the needs of the various groups that constitute the school community and ensure that the institution

runs smoothly. Rather than supply individuals with direction as to how they should perform their duties, the principal is expected to create an atmosphere that will encourage the members of his staff to develop relationships that support professional development.

Teachers' Perspectives

The majority of the teachers in my sample described administrators as distanced from the rest of the staff, more closely aligned with the Board of Education than with the classroom teachers. The move from instructor to administrator continues to hold powerful symbolic meaning within Japanese school communities. In the eyes of many teachers as well as administrators, when an individual accepts a promotion and moves his center of operation from the faculty room to the principal's office, his allegiance shifts from instruction to administration. As the data below suggests, teachers rarely feel comfortable receiving feedback from administrators regarding their abilities in the classroom.

TABLE 1

From whom do you get information about your strengths and weaknesses as a teacher?

Colleagues	48%
Self	39%
Students	26%
Principal	22%

In some locations, teachers feel that principals emphasize their responsibility to discipline instructors over the need to provide support and guidance to staff members. Another reason that teachers sometimes choose not to consult with administrators about educational matters is their belief that the principal is out of touch with the challenges that confront the classroom teacher. Instructors may lack confidence in the principal's ability to understand the problems they face in the classroom.

The comments below are illustrative of the skepticism many teachers feel about the principal's ability to assist them in educational matters:

> Mr. Takagi (junior high, math): If I have a problem, I definitely do not talk to the principal about it. The principal might want to talk about other unrelated things, like working conditions, and I might butt heads with him. So I don't talk with him. I think it would be the same at almost any school. Even if relations between teachers and the principal were good, I don't think there are many teachers who would consult with the principal.

> Mr. Watanabe (junior high, English): Of course the principal helps teachers in Japan, but the principal is the last person to consult. If I have to talk to someone, if I need advice, I talk to another person teaching the same grade or the head teacher. The principal doesn't really have an impact on what I do. The teachers at the same grade level are more helpful than the principal. The principal is the last person I go to.

The Influence of Culture

Culturally sanctioned approaches to interpersonal communication exert a powerful influence the strategies principals use to negotiate relationships with the teachers in their schools. As Shimahara notes, culture "exerts a powerful and ubiquitous influence on the ways in which individual members act to solve their problems" (Shimahara, 1991: 272). He characterizes the Japanese public school as a "moral community" that is subject to intense scrutiny from both within and outside its borders. One tenet of Japanese social relations that principals are usually careful to respect is conflict avoidance. This concept has an impact on both the tone of administrative/faculty relationships and patterns of communication within the school.

In Japanese social as well as professional settings utmost care is taken to sidestep situations that have the potential to produce confrontation or feelings of animosity between the members of a group (Lebra, 1984; Rohlen, 1984; Smith, 1983). The desire to avoid confrontation at all costs sheds light on why practices that might be considered ineffective in an American setting are embraced in the Japanese workplace. There is a perception amongst Japanese educators that evaluation will produce conflict. In order to

support positive human relations, to ensure that group harmony is maintained, administrators avoid entering into situations in which they might be required to express their opinions about teachers' professional abilities.

The straightforward communication of criticism is perceived as having the potential to upset the fragile balance of human relations that keeps the school running smoothly. According to supervisory models in the United States, teacher observations that are conducted effectively will increase staff morale. When personnel or professional issues arise, principals are advised to convey their opinions about these matters to the people involved so that problems can be resolved as quickly as possible. In Japan, in contrast, it is feared that if the principal were to meet with teachers and share her assessment of each individual's strengths and weaknesses, the self-confidence of many instructors, as well as the morale of the entire staff, will suffer. This helps explain why strategies that might seem puzzling to an American observer, such as evaluating teachers but not sharing the results with the people assessed, make more sense in the Japanese context.

Teachers as well as administrators believe that schools are best served by taciturn principals. Only five percent of the interviewees in this study said they would prefer a more transparent teacher evaluation system (along the lines of the American model) over the current Japanese approach. The most common rationale provided for this response was fear that the communication of evaluation results would damage staff enthusiasm:

> Mr. Sato (elementary, principal): There are teachers who will put more effort into their work if they are told their weak points, but there are others that will lose their motivation. "Why am I working my hardest if the principal is giving me poor marks?" If the principal shared the results of evaluations with the teachers the atmosphere at the school would change a lot. It would not be a positive change. The school atmosphere would become darker. The teachers who receive complements would feel good about themselves but the ones who were criticized would feel hurt. That would be a problem. The homeroom teacher's responsibility is to look after each of his students. The principal's responsibility is to look after each of the teachers. The principal is responsible for looking after the teachers more than the students. That is what a manager does. If the principal shared the strengths and weaknesses of the teachers, that would be a serious problem.

This comment epitomizes the tendency on the part of the informants in this study to equate evaluation with criticism. Very few interviewees mentioned instances in which administrators validated the efforts of teachers. Conferences with the principal are viewed as forums for expressing dissatisfaction with teachers' actions, rather than opportunities for principals to commend teachers or assist them in improving their instructional abilities. The principal/teacher interaction is perceived of as primarily a one-way flow of negative feedback rather than an opportunity for a mutual exchange of ideas or professional support. Intimidated by the prospect of discussing their professional abilities with the principal, and discouraged from doing so by a solid hierarchy of authority, teachers turn to other members of the community for assistance in educational matters.

Facilitating Professional Development

As described above, goal setting by teachers in America is often linked to feedback provided by administrators. Professional development plans flow from observations made by principals in conjunction with classroom observations. In Japan, the connection between evaluation and professional development is rarely established. The two activities are treated as separate and unrelated exercises. A study by Ito (1994) supports the idea that teachers in the United States generally view administrators as facilitators of professional development whereas Japanese teachers do not expect principals to fulfill this role.

A participant in the American educational system might assume that if teachers were not evaluated by the administration and received no tangible rewards for participating in professional development offerings, the majority would neglect this aspect of their jobs and concentrate on other tasks. Yet Japanese teachers place a high priority on honing their skills in the classroom and participate regularly in professional development activities (Yoshida, 1999; Lewis & Tsuchida, 1997; Tsuchida & Lewis,

1996; Stigler and Hiebert, 1997; Stevenson & Stigler, 1992). If the administration does not provide the impetus for such efforts, why do instructors in Japan invest time and energy into becoming more adept educators? What are the forces at work that motivate teachers to continually attempt to better themselves? Where do they obtain the feedback upon which to develop professional goals?

The principal's focus on managerial and political matters has the potential to create a large vacuum at the center of the learning institution. This does not occur, however, because teachers assume responsibility for many of the tasks performed by administrators in American schools. All of the teachers in a Japanese school are involved in some capacity in the direction of the school. Committees of teachers facilitate and monitor school finance, curriculum, student guidance, discipline, and other matters. These committees establish school-wide goals and monitor daily events as well. Experienced teachers rather than administrators usually head the committees. This arrangement encourages teachers to view themselves as key participants in school governance rather than employees serving the administration, and to support decisions made in the interest of the institution.

The long work hours and abundance of school sponsored activities force teachers to collaborate to an extent that is uncommon in the United States (Okano and Tsuchiya, 1998; Lewis and Tsuchida, 1997; Lewis, 1995; Rohlen, 1983). Opportunities are constantly created that encourage staff members to work closely together and learn from one another. In contrast with American schools, where instructors often write lesson plans for their own classrooms and construct activities designed to meet the individual needs of the students in their classes, teachers in Japan tend to work together more closely when conducting these tasks. Staff members frequently work at school on weekends and during vacations, go out drinking parties, and take vacations together.

In addition to the large quantity of time teachers spend together, the physical design of the school facility encourages collaboration. School buildings in Japan are

remarkably uniform and one ubiquitous feature is the faculty room that houses all of the teachers' desks. The gravitational center of a Japanese school is the faculty room. The desks of all staff members are located here and during break times or free periods teachers usually return to the staff room to work. Each morning before school the entire faculty congregates in this room for a short staff meeting. At the junior high school level, students in need of assistance look for their teachers in the faculty room.

Decision-making in Japanese schools reflects the great respect given to classroom teachers' knowledge and experience. Ichikawa observes that, "In Japanese schools important decision making takes place at a faculty meeting in which all staff members usually participate. The decision making is done through a bottom-up process instead of a top-down process characteristic of the United States" (Ichikawa, 1986: 252). Consensus building is commonly used to arrive at decisions, with each participant's vote holding equal weight. This decision-making framework communicates the message that teachers have a great deal of expertise to share and the school depends on their active participation.

The tendency to rely on teachers rather than administrators as the key players in a Japanese school's educational program extends into the area of professional development. As has been described above, administrators rarely establish connections between teacher evaluation and professional development. As with most educational matters, this activity is facilitated by teachers. A team of instructors or the entire staff sets professional development goals for the faculty and organizes events designed to support those objectives. Whole school research meetings (*konai kenkyu*) are also directed by members of the staff. The principal usually remains at the periphery, observing and making some formal comments at the conclusion of a meeting.

Teachers, rather than administrators, have been established as the most knowledgeable and accessible mentors at the school and these are the people depended on for guidance about educational issues. When asked who they turn to with questions about

instructional matters, ninety percent of the instructors interviewed for this study mentioned a teaching colleague, while only forty-five percent said they turn to the principal. This is logical, considering the great value attached to building bonds between teachers in Japanese schools. As the comments below illustrate, teachers regard other instructors as their most valuable professional resources:

> Mrs. Kawakami (elementary, fifth grade): It's difficult to evaluate your performance by yourself, but there are colleagues that can help. We can help each other and check how we're doing. We've had some good opportunities to do that. If I'm having a problem with something, someone might suggest that I try this out, introduce me to relevant books, give me worksheets to try out, or provide moral support. Having a teachers' room where we all meet is helpful. It encourages communication.

In the Japanese school, instructors rather than principals are positioned at the center of professional development activity. As a result of their frequent collaboration, members of a school faculty develop symbiotic relationships with their teaching colleagues. This interdependence encourages teachers to focus on professional development, even though they receive no material rewards for their efforts. Connected in an intimate web of personal and professional relationships, teachers feel a responsibility to do the best job they can so as not to let the community down. High levels of teacher responsibility and interdependence increase commitment to professional development efforts and allow principals to remain on the periphery. The professional development machine is so efficiently constructed to run on the energy of teachers that little action by the administration is necessary; it drives itself.

Exception to the Pattern

The most common justification provided for the distance created between principals and their staffs is a desire to avoid conflict. The large majority of the teachers I interviewed do not feel comfortable consulting with administrators and view principals as last resorts when they need assistance. However, there were several notable exceptions to

this pattern. Twenty percent of the teachers interviewed described principals they have worked with who actively promote professional development at their school sites. These administrators may not share the results of teacher evaluations the faculty, but they do work in partnership with staff members in attempt to improve the quality of instruction at their schools. In contrast with more traditional principals, these leaders attempt to build close relationships with the members of their faculties and to promote innovation in their schools.

Although in the minority, principals who refuse to accept a marginal role in staff development exert great influence on the instructors with whom they work. The teachers at these schools regard members of the administration as allies rather than critics, and are more likely to honestly discuss with the principal challenges they face at school:

> Mr. Iguchi (junior high, art and social studies): At this school the principal has lots of time and talks with the teachers regularly about their effort, teaching methods, relations with students, and so on. The teachers can speak freely with the principal. They do so everyday. It's a small school with few students, so the principal knows every student well. For example, he knows what kind of family a student has, how he has been raised, things that he is worried about. Here the principal also talks with students everyday and learns a lot from them.

> Mr. Inaba (elementary, vice-principal): At my last school there were two principals during the four years I taught there. The first one didn't say anything to the teachers. He didn't give us any feedback. The atmosphere was not good at all. The second principal shared his impressions with us, both good and bad. The mood changed noticeably. Teachers tried hard to improve on their weak points. He would give teachers criticism, but never in front of the whole faculty.

These observations suggest that administrators can play an active role in professional development without disrupting staff harmony. Communication from the principal does not always have to consist only of criticism, even in the Japanese context. The informants quoted above appreciate and benefit from the involvement of their principals. Although the principals described above do not conduct formal class observations or post-observation conferences, as is typical in the United States, they have

devised methods of providing feedback to faculty members that are not perceived as threatening or confrontational. Mr. Inaba goes so far as to compare two styles of leadership and state his preference for the more active administrative approach. At his school, administrative inattention to the situation of the teachers actually created tension whereas the more communicative leader improved staff morale.

There is a perception amongst educators that the hands-on principal will pose a threat to the autonomy of instructors, who are accustomed to handling educational matters with little interference from the administration. The experiences of some of the informants in this study raise the possibility that such fears may not always be justified. I did not find any instances of a rivalry or struggle for power between faculty and administration as a result of an administrator's desire to participate in professional development. All of the teachers I interviewed who had worked with more "hands-on" type principals regarded the efforts of administrators as positive signs of their commitment to the learning process.

The factor that correlated most directly with leadership style was age. The more recently promoted, younger administrators are more likely to adopt a more hands-on approach to leading school staffs. This raises the possibility that traditional roles and responsibilities will evolve as more recently educated individuals enter the administration ranks. Younger administrators may be questioning some of the attitudes and approaches followed by their predecessors. Some are finding ways to take more active roles in areas traditionally facilitated by teachers, without lessening faculty members' authority or self-confidence. According to the informants in this study, teachers actually welcome increased administrative activity when the administrators are tactful and supportive. And the fact that most of the principals who are adopting this approach have been trained recently, with more tenuous ties to the way things were done in the past, hints that more changes in this direction may be on the way. Teacher autonomy and active administration are not necessarily mutually exclusive concepts.

Conclusion

Research on administrators in the United States tends to assume that principals should be actively involved in all educational activity in their schools. Principals are located at the center of the learning institution, connected to all school-related projects. They are expected to keep aware of developments at the student, classroom, faculty and school levels. Effective principals should share their knowledge and experience with all members of the community. In order to achieve this goal, they are encouraged to develop open lines of communication with students, parents and faculty. In the American school, providing leadership in instructional matters is generally considered a top priority of the American principal, with staff evaluation and professional development receiving particular emphasis.

Administrative leadership evokes a different set of connotations in Japanese education culture. Conflict-avoidance enters heavily into the management strategies relied on by principals. As a result, their primary responsibility is to maintain balance within the institution, not to press people to achieve reach specific professional goals. Principals are expected to lead through managing and coordinating rather directing or evaluating. If the principal creates a harmonious environment for teaching and learning, it is believed, members of the community will naturally achieve excellence.

These contrasting interpretations of what it means to lead have influences that filter down through all levels of the institution. Each member of a school staff must adjust her behavior in response to activity at the top of the administrative hierarchy. In the area of professional development, teachers' responsibilities are established based on the roles that administrators carve out for themselves in this process. Given the dissimilar interpretations of leadership, it follows that the structure of professional development in Japan is quite different than that provided in most American school districts.

In order to preserve school harmony, Japanese principals rarely involve themselves in activities related to teaching and learning. Teachers as well as

administrators fear that if principals were to play a more active part in faculty evaluation and professional development, staff morale would suffer. Rather than take this risk, principals tend to remain at the periphery of professional development efforts, rarely communicating with teachers about their performance. This strategy is viewed as the safest and most palatable approach to leading a school.

An educator working in another country might assume that the hands-off approach that most Japanese principals employ to manage their staffs would hinder professional development efforts--that teachers will not receive the guidance necessary to become more adept educators. This does not, however, generally occur. Rather than leaving a void, the principal's location at the sideline creates a space for teachers to develop and publicly demonstrate their professional expertise. It also encourages faculty members to develop strong bonds with their teaching colleagues. The limited role that principals play in instructional affairs requires teachers to work together to solve the problems they face in the their classrooms. Lacking strong support from the top, they turn to one another for guidance. As a result, teachers take on leadership roles in numerous school activities.

This high degree of teacher autonomy is particularly evident in the area of teacher evaluation and professional development. Although principals do complete official personnel evaluations for all teachers, these assessments are almost never shared with the instructors. Instead, informants pointed to the strong influence that their peers have in the area of professional development. Instructors respect the feedback shared by their co-teachers more highly than opinions expressed by the principal, and establish professional development plans based on input from their colleagues. Using one another as resources, teachers work as a team to raise the quality of instruction in their schools. In Japan, the collective power of the teaching staff provides the fuel that drives the professional development engine.

A long history of tension between the government and the teacher's union, combined with cultural values about interpersonal communication, have created a gulf between the two groups. In assigning roles and responsibilities to the members of a school staff, great care is taken to minimize the chances that teachers or administrators will antagonize one another. In most cases this translates into a division of labor. Principals rarely combine forces with instructors to complete tasks. Instead, they concentrate on the managerial aspects of directing a school and depend on the teachers to facilitate most activities linked to teaching and learning. If we apply Drake and Roe's (1986) analysis of the responsibilities of a school leader (see above), it is apparent that principals function as the coordinators of the Japanese school and the teachers act as the facilitators of the instructional program. This arrangement endows classroom teachers with a high degree of influence over school processes. Principals may occupy the highest rung of the institutional hierarchy, but it is the teachers have the most direct impact curriculum, instruction, and policy in the Japanese school.

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